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PSYCHIATRY

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PATIENT EDUCATION

Ziprasidone

Geodon / Generic oral capsules and short-acting injection

A guide for adults taking ziprasidone.
Follow the directions on your prescription and your provider's recommendations.

TAKE EACH DOSE WITH A MEAL | CHECK HEART-RHYTHM INTERACTIONS

Formulations: Oral capsules are usually taken twice daily with meals. A short-acting intramuscular injection is given by healthcare professionals.

What it is used for

Ziprasidone treats schizophrenia and acute manic or mixed episodes of bipolar I disorder. It is also used with lithium or valproate for bipolar maintenance. Injectable use for acute agitation has separate instructions.

How it works

It blocks dopamine and serotonin receptors. Its effects on the heart's QT interval are an important part of selection and monitoring.

What to expect over time

Some symptoms improve earlier than others. Changes in hallucinations, mood, or organized thinking often develop over several weeks. Track practical goals, such as regular sleep and daily activities, and report side effects or limited benefit.

Taking your medication

- Take every oral dose with a meal of at least about 500 calories for reliable absorption. A small snack may be insufficient.
- Swallow capsules whole.
- If you miss a dose, take it when you remember unless it is almost time for the next dose. Then skip it. Do not double a dose.
- Do not compensate for a missed meal by taking extra medication.

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ZIPRASIDONE / 02

Side effects and safety

Possible side effects

- Sleepiness or dizziness
- Restlessness, stiffness, or tremor
- Nausea or other stomach discomfort
- Possible weight or metabolic changes

Keeping track of treatment

Some side effects resolve with time; others may require a change of medication. Discuss persistent or bothersome side effects with your provider.

Expect periodic checks of weight, blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and movement symptoms. Some changes, such as higher blood sugar, may occur before you feel different.

Report new mouth, tongue, face, or limb movements. Tardive dyskinesia is a movement disorder that can persist after medication is stopped.

An ECG and electrolytes may be needed based on risk. Lower average weight-gain risk than some alternatives does not eliminate metabolic monitoring.

If you take too much

For a suspected overdose, call Poison Control at **1-800-222-1222** immediately, even if you feel well. Call 911 for a seizure, collapse, trouble breathing, or inability to wake.

Before you start

Discuss diabetes, heart-rhythm problems, fainting, seizures, low blood counts, swallowing difficulties, and kidney or liver disease. Antipsychotics increase the risk of death in older adults with dementia-related psychosis.

Discuss pregnancy, pregnancy plans, and breastfeeding with your provider. Treatment decisions should consider both the medication and the condition being treated.

Long QT, a recent heart attack, uncompensated heart failure, or certain arrhythmias can rule out treatment. Discuss low potassium or magnesium.

Medicines and interactions

Review all your medications with your provider, including over-the-counter medicines and supplements. Have new medications checked before taking them.

Do not combine with incompatible QT-prolonging medicines. Diuretics, persistent diarrhea, or vomiting can increase rhythm risk through electrolyte loss.

Alcohol, sedatives, and blood-pressure medicines add dizziness or impairment.

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Living with your treatment

When to get help

Emergency symptoms. Get emergency care for fever with severe muscle stiffness and confusion, a seizure, fainting with an irregular heartbeat, or trouble breathing. Fever and stiffness can signal neuroleptic malignant syndrome, a rare but serious reaction.

Prompt medical advice. Contact your provider promptly for new involuntary movements, trouble swallowing, severe restlessness, or symptoms of high blood sugar such as unusual thirst and frequent urination.

If you feel unsafe or have thoughts of self-harm, call 911 or go to an emergency department.

Your questions answered

Can I stop when I feel better?
Consult with your provider. Continuing treatment may prevent symptoms from returning. Abrupt stopping can cause withdrawal symptoms or a relapse.

What if I cannot sit still?
An inner urge to keep moving can be akathisia, a medication side effect. Tell your provider promptly; it can be mistaken for worsening anxiety.

Everyday tips

Stand up slowly. Avoid driving until you know how the medication affects alertness and coordination.

Stay hydrated and take breaks in hot weather. Some antipsychotics interfere with temperature regulation.

Discuss appetite or weight changes early, and keep scheduled monitoring visits.

Storage and safety

Keep medication in its labeled container, away from excess heat and moisture and out of reach of children and pets. Do not share it. Ask a pharmacy about disposal of unused medication.

Sources

Official prescribing information: ziprasidone
Official prescribing information: ziprasidone

Educational handout; does not replace your prescription or provider's recommendations.